

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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P 311010Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5841

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1696

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MT

SUBJ: EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TEAM

REF: A. STATE 237728, B. STATE 217784, C. VALLETTA 1645,
D. VALLETTA 1593

1. IN RESPONSE TO STATE 217784, I HAVE AGAIN CAREFULLY REVIEWED BACKGROUND OF GOM REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE TO EOD PROJECT AT LUQA AIRPORT. OUR COMMENTS CONTAINED PARA 5 REF D STILL APPLY. IT IS MY JUDGMENT THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO REOPEN ISSUED WITH GOM BY OFFERING DOD TRANSPORTATION FOR US NAVY EOD TEAM FROM SIGONELLA. IN ANY CASE, AS NOTED PARA 2 REF A, IT IS INDEED UNLIKELY THAT GOM WOULD ACQUIESCE IN ENTRY OF US MILITARY AIRCRAFT, EVEN FOR THIS PURPOSE.

2. AS EMBASSY REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (VALLETTA 1645 AND 1593), LUQA PROJECT HAS ADVANCED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE GOM MADE ORIGINAL REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE LAST AUGUST. ITALIAN EQUIPMENT, PLUS GERMAN EXPERTS AND EQUIPMENT, NOW AVAILABLE TO GOM AND BEING UTILIZED AT LUQA. THEREFORE, I DO NOT CONSIDER USG ASSISTANCE ESSENTIAL FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT.

3. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT MINTOFF WOULD INEVITABLY VIEW TRANSPORTATION OFFER AS PROOF THAT HE HAS ONLY TO RESORT TO HIS FAVORITE UNORTHODOX APPROACHES IN ORDER TO REVERSE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED USG POSITION ON THIS OR OTHER SUBJECTS. I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE DESIRABLE FROM THE
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STANDPOINT OF OVERALL USG INTERESTS IN MALTA.

4. THEREFORE, WHILE APPRECIATING DOD'S FURTHER EFFORTS TO BE HELPFUL WITH EOD PROJECT, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST FOR RESPONSE TO BELLIZZI TO NOTE THAT, AS PREVIOUSLY CONVEYED TO GOM BY EMBASSY, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE USG DECISION THAT WE CAN ASSIST ONLY IF GOM PAYS ALL COSTS. SMITH

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NNN

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